

# **The Church and the Immigrant**

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**The Immigration Problem**

**The Catholic Immigrant**

## **The Catholic Mind**

**SEMI-MONTHLY**

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## The Church and the Immigrant

BY THE REV. FRANCIS C. KELLEY, D.D., PRESIDENT OF  
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH EXTENSION SOCIETY.

*A paper read before the Fourteenth Annual Convention  
of the American Federation of Catholic Societies,  
at Toledo, Ohio, August 17, 1915.*

THE invitation which the Right Reverend Chairman so kindly extended to me, to speak before this splendid gathering, was appreciated perhaps more than he himself imagined it would be. It was appreciated, not only out of respect for Bishop Muldoon and out of my interest in Federation, but also, and in particular, because I was given a subject of very great importance, upon which, frankly, I was anxious to speak. My own special work is the work of church extension, which has much to do with the countless immigrants who scatter every year over the face of our country. Indeed, one of the objects set down in our constitution is that of guarding the Faith among immigrants.

### THE SELF-SUPPORTING GROUP

Early Catholic immigration to America was chiefly Irish and German. They were people who took care of themselves, for there was no one else to take care of them. They form, even yet, with their descendants, the principal part of the self-supporting group of Catholics. To them, later on, were added the French Canadians, Poles and other Slavs. I place all of these in the self-

supporting group, because they usually settled together in towns or cities and took care of themselves. Even in rural districts they built their churches and schools, educated their own priests, organized their teaching sisterhoods and built up the Church for their own protection and their own blessing. It is not so much a question as to what the Church did for them as what they did for the Church. The blessings of religion, of course, are inestimable; but these people knew what the blessings were and took very good care that they should have them. Wherever there were twenty-five Irish families the Church appeared, and no thanks to any one but God and those twenty-five families. Wherever the same number of Germans settled the case was the same. It took a few more Poles, possibly, but the church they built made up for the greater number that it took to build it. In New England, the French Canadians brought "St. Peter's rooster" to surmount the Cross of Christ; it took more families of French, perhaps, double the number of those required for a Polish beginning; but the French Canadian rarely scatters. He settles in groups and few, if any, of the settlements are today without Catholic clergy. Most of them have Catholic schools. The Bohemians are about equally divided between Catholics and atheists, but the Bohemians took care of themselves. They owe very little to us. They have their daily paper as well as their weeklies and churches and schools for every center.

Wherever these members of self-supporting groups of immigrants settle, they, themselves, solve the problem of religious care. They have become assets to the Church in this country. Losses have not been great among them. I often think that these losses are not much greater here than they would have been had the immi-

grants stayed at home. It is true, as I stated, that half of the Bohemians in America are atheists; but half of the Bohemians in Europe are atheists, too. In proportion to their numbers, there are as many Protestant Irish in Ireland, as there Protestant Irish in America. Regarding their religious creeds, the Germans line up in America about as they do in Germany; and the Poles likewise. The salt water of the Atlantic has not tainted the freshness of their Faith.

It should not, however, be a question with us as to whether or not the immigrants remain as good here as they were in the old country. It should be a question as to how we can make them better. What can we do to improve their religious condition, while the country is improving them in other ways? Contact with American life necessarily changes the immigrant; ultimately, all will be materially changed. At the present time, some who belong to this self-supporting group have not advanced, because they keep too much to themselves. Their very isolation makes them lack self-assertiveness; hence they have not the influence in their communities that their exemplary lives should produce.

What, then, can be done with this self-supporting group who are still struggling to get a hold in American life, to utilize better their strength for the good of religion and the good of the country? I think that everyone acquainted with such of this group as have not risen in all respects to the level of American life, will say that one of the potent means of bringing them close to us is for their Catholic fellow-citizens of education, means and influence to take a deeper practical interest in them. Such interest is now taken in secular agencies, and by non-Catholic societies. Catholics have not gone seriously

into social work. Material help is needed, in view of the crowding, congestion, and bad-housing of the city, all of which leads to disease and delinquency. We need *practical praying*, praying with the hands, as well as the lips. We need to interest ourselves in helping our brethren to understand and practise the civic, as well as other virtues. We need Catholic social settlements and clubs. We need Catholic day nurseries. We need trained workers; and we need, also, to consider our point of view regarding the non-sectarian societies which are established to help the immigrants, to help the poor, to open playgrounds, to establish free libraries and to provide free baths. Our attitude to the existing civic societies of this kind is one of too much suspicion without investigation. A priest said to me a short time ago: "If I were pastor, in a poor section of the city, I would have a paid worker among my people, who would keep in touch with all existing non-sectarian charities. She would justify her salary through the actual help she would get for my poor people. We ought to find out the good in these agencies, and see if we can't cooperate more."

Of course, the idea of a trained charity worker does not always strike the average Catholic in a favorable light. We have an idea that paying people to do charity work destroys the idea of charity in it, and that efficiency in charitable organizations does not depend upon money. This is all very well in the abstract, or in a small community where you know everybody, but if efficiency does not depend on money, there is no reason why money should not depend upon efficiency. It does not destroy the virtue of charity, when the one who gives all his or her time to it is asking a living in return. We need in this day of specialists some specialists of our own. They

must live, or they can give us only a small portion of their time: the useless part. If "he who preaches the Gospel must live by the Gospel," there seems to be no legitimate reason why we could not have charity workers who receive at least enough remuneration to live. But there is another, and a much stronger reason for having paid workers. Somehow, you do get efficiency under an incentive of that sort of temporal reward. There is not a business office in the city of Chicago run with more efficiency by its employees, and yet more economy, than the office of Church Extension; largely because of the premium that has been put upon efficiency: because efficiency pays. We are living in an age of specialists. If we do not do it, we shall fall behind in the race. Hence, I welcome the idea of Loyola University's School of Sociology and other efforts to train social workers, and I praise the Jesuits for their success. The social workers that come from such a school, will find their places. They are the beginners in a field we have scarcely touched, and they will become more important to us as the years go on.

There are two universities in this country that have eighty-five per cent. of Jews, of recent arrival, among their students. That is an eloquent testimony of the self-assertiveness of our Jewish fellow-citizens. Many of our non-English-speaking Catholic immigrants lack that self-assertiveness. It is true that among the self-supporting group, many establish their own schools, but they pay too little attention to higher education. There is too much taking of bright children out of school immediately after their First Communion, and the consequence is that not enough leaders of the right kind develop among the people. There have been many excellent men, perhaps, who kept saloons; but no one be-

lieves that saloon-keepers, as a class, are the best leaders of their people. There are too many who follow leaders absolutely unfit for leadership.

Among the self-supporting group, who have not scattered, there is, to my belief, no lack of churches, little lack of priests, considering circumstances, and a fair percentage of school. But there is a sad lack, especially among the poor, of the other agencies which help in the cultivation of the civic spirit, the encouragement of higher education, and the building up of that pride which makes a man assert his interests in his race and people. I cannot help thinking that the Irish, Germans, Poles and French Canadians who were born in the United States, and who have long ago ceased to consider themselves as among the immigrant class, do not show sufficient sympathy for those who have not yet "graduated." English-speaking Catholics, especially who are now so mixed in race, fail to take the interest in Catholic immigrants that they should. Sympathy goes a long way. It is a popular idea among too many of us, for example, that the mother-tongues of these people retard their growth. The mother-tongue is doomed to die in America, and yet it cannot be killed. It is a tie that binds the immigrant to the very best that was in his native land. It is a good thing that it dies hard. It is no burden to carry around. To lose it too quickly means that an immigrant people tends to feel contempt for their parents and the Faith of their fathers. The immigrant should be taught his language; should be encouraged to preserve it. It is safer to let his great-grandchildren lose it than to let his children forget it. The man who is ashamed of the country from which he came is not likely to be bound to the new country by anything but self-



interest. It is better for us to have immigrants with hearts right than to have them singing the Star Spangled Banner; for what the Star Spangled Banner represents will be loved more by the man who still respects the land of his forefathers than by the one who has forgotten it in his love for money and position.

The sympathy which we ought to have for the poor immigrant should shine out especially in priests; and with them prominent laymen should take an interest in all legislation concerning the immigrant. We should not leave such an important matter entirely to the judgment and control of those not bound to our new people by the strong ties of religion. I plead, therefore, that sympathy with the immigrant, who is on his way, should be shown by those who have arrived at their place in American life.

There are, however, a minority of immigrants, even in the self-supporting group, who have not taken care of themselves, and who are scarcely ever thought of. It is among these that losses have occurred. I refer to those who scatter in the small towns in the small rural districts. The Church has had no organized means of reaching them. They were too poor to build churches for themselves, and not numerous enough to make very helpful offerings out of their poverty. Many times, in the history of the American Church have efforts been made to reach them. Out of the money contributed to missionary bishops by foreign societies some of these immigrants have been taken care of, have been assisted in building little churches, and where this was done, the Faith has been to a great extent preserved. But nine out of ten of the small centers of population are even yet without Catholic churches and are visited by the priest

only as stations, or only for sick calls. It is too much to expect that people living twenty, thirty or forty miles from a church are going to hand down the legacy of their religion to their grand-children. The Catholic names found on the rosters of non-Catholic churches are the "fallen-aways" of this class, but most of them swell the ranks of indifferentism. It is true to say that we have had many losses; but these losses can be traced to the scattered. I deny that there have been great losses due to neglect in the cities, or in established parishes. There will always be losses everywhere, but not losses due to neglect. For the scattered immigrants, however, we could have done better. I am not afraid to say that there was too much parochial selfishness in the beginning. Neither am I afraid to say that there was considerable selfishness of other kinds. That was, perhaps, to be expected, when this was considered a missionary country, and where everything had to be built up, and everything done. The Church Extension Society has taken this particular field for its own. In ten years it has found 1,131 places in which to build Catholic chapels where none existed before, and has built them. It is safe to say that within the next twenty-five years, it will find at least 5,000 more such places. There are villages in the United States where these chapels saved the communities' Catholic life. There are places where the chapel cars discovered enough families to form a nucleus for parishes. Please do not consider me only a special pleader for my own work, when I point out the necessity for increasing and enlarging it, and thus enabling it to reach all the scattered communities, very many of whom are immigrants. The remedy for conditions here is the same as the remedy

for conditions in the cities. It is sympathy, and practical sympathy from those who can give it.

#### MISSIONARY GROUP

I have called this the "missionary" group because the people composing it have not been trained to help themselves, or do not do so for other reasons. The nationalities represented in it have either been insufficiently instructed, or have been subjected for generations, to atheistic propaganda. The principal members of the group are Italians and Mexicans. With them are some of the minor Slavic elements. The Italians are mostly in cities; the Slavs in the mining districts and the Mexicans on the ranches in the Southwest. The Italians, however, are just as Catholic here as they were in Italy. I deny that they have become worse. Those of them that go to church are, I assert, even better Catholics because they go out of choice, and not from human respect. We often forget, in studying the Italian situation, how terrible was the war of irreligion carried on against the Faith of Italian Catholics in their native land. I believe that the percentage of Italians who attend Mass regularly in America is as large as those who attend Mass regularly in Italy; and, I believe, that there is something hopeful in the Italian situation. At least I have noticed it in Chicago. The Italians will send their children to Catholic schools. New York also can prove this. They will do it all the time if there are schools enough. The late Archbishop Quigley tried the experiment of establishing schools and paying for them, and in every case he was successful in obtaining Italian children. The Italian religious problem can be settled only in one way and that is through schools. But it is a problem that must be set-

tled quickly, for it is growing on our hands, and of all the immigrants who come to the United States, the Italian is the one who is least tenacious of the language and traditions that bind him to the best that was in his own country.

Mexicans settle usually on the ranches, and are Catholic in name, at least. They will not go to Mass even when they come into the large cities, but they will hold to their traditions; and through their traditions, hold, at least, to the substance of the Faith. They will send their children to Catholic schools. The Church Extension Society has proved that. In even the poor little huts that we often have erected for them as schools, they have crowded their children, often leaving the comfortable non-Catholic schools. We can save the Mexicans who have settled in America, if we can get schools for them; and, more than that, we can make their children supporters of the Church, and good American citizens. Don't blame the Mexican too much. For fifty years they have been deprived of Catholic education, and the Church has been persecuted, or impeded by tyrannical laws. Let us do what we can for those we have in our country! Among the other races we might call them the "children," but they are bright children and well worth saving, for there are more than 100,000 Mexicans in the United States.

In this group I class the Ruthenians and Slavic people who belong to other Uniate rites than the Latin. All these people are subjected to the proselyting influence of Russia. How few of us know the fact that it is a part of the foreign policy of the Russian Government to subsidize the so-called Orthodox missionaries in an effort to win over to schism all the non-Roman Rite Slavs,

and in many cases they have been successful. Today the Church has organized a Greek diocese in the United States, and the situation is constantly improving.

If one country goes to war with another for the preservation of its very existence, its leaders take an account of its resources, not for the purpose of "resoluting about them," but for the purpose of using them for the salvation of their country. We Catholics who are in a holy, though kindly war to preserve the Faith of Jesus Christ, take account of our resources at great meetings like this, but we are never prepared to make all the sacrifices necessary to use these resources for the good of our Cause. We must save to the Faith every Catholic who comes to this country. To do that even the missionary group must have their churches, their priests, their schools, and then more schools, their teachers and their press, plus our assistance. There is no way on God's green earth to help them keep the Faith, except in the way that has been time-honored in the history of the Catholic Church. We can "resolute" until our voices grow hoarse; we can write until our fingers cramp; but we cannot save our immigrants without churches, priests and schools, and charity churches and priests, and charity schools cost money. It is money that is needed, and outside of prayer, it is the only thing that is needed, because it gives us the power to get everything else. It is all very well to say that many of this group have too much emotional religion. That may be true, but what religion they have must be used as a foundation for what is better. God gave us the foundation, and we must build upon it. It is all very well to say that Italian and Mexican priests do not come to America; but we have plenty of honored pastors among the Italians and Mexicans who have

learned their languages. It is all very well to say that they do not understand American conditions; but we do not try to make them understand. Schools, schools, schools and more schools; sisterhoods that will sacrifice themselves; priests that will starve for them; a press to speak for them; and the money to support them all. Are you trying to find a solution for your home missionary difficulties? There is no need to look long and far for it. It has been in front of you for fifty years. It is money: cold cash and personal service.

I have avoided giving you statistics: what is the use? You have had them spread before you for ten years. I have purposely touched only the high places, because every one of you knows by experience over what valleys each high spot rises. I have tried to bring the situation before you plainly, and to bring it all down to the words which are the key-words for the solution of the problem: prayer and money and personal service. You expect me to offer you some practical solution for the difficulty, because I have been working on the practical side of the problem for ten years. When I offer it to you, again I ask you not to think that I am selfishly pleading only for the success of my own work. I do not care who does this work, so long as it is done, but if I am going to build a house, and I can find a piece of land that has already been graded up as I want it, and, perhaps has a foundation put in that suits me, and I can purchase it as cheaply as I can buy a lot that is full of hills and hollows, I certainly will avail myself of the offer which saves me both labor and money. We must organize some work to solve our missionary problem. We must put at the head of it an expert, and have experts under him who will be helpers wherever there is need, but whose principal

business will be to teach workers how to avail themselves of the agencies that are now neglected, and will be a bureau of information, but, above all, will gather in money. The Church Extension Society has its magazine already producing for the scattered flocks, through the ramifications of the Society that supports it, nearly \$300,000 a year. The Society has its own trained office force, its chapel and motor cars in the missionary districts, its record of achievements and its successful methods. But it has not scratched the surface of the needs, nor has it taken any more than the surface gold from the charity and zeal of Catholics. Why not encourage the Church Extension Society to establish an immigrant department, and for its support, let all of us rally around the "missionary quarter." By quarter, I mean a quarter of a dollar, twenty-five cents. If the word goes out from the bishop into the parishes, into the societies, fraternal, pious, literary, if the idea is pushed and advertised with sufficient force, if the needs are put strongly enough before the people, if, in a word, we "get behind" this thing, we can make that missionary quarter, given every year, almost as popular as the Easter duty. No good Catholic thinks of missing his Easter duty and few of the men and women who make it would refuse the missionary quarter. It is all a question of meaning to do the thing; of standing up and saying: "We will do it;" of facing the fact that we need the ammunition and that we cannot win the fight without it. That missionary quarter, given by all, would solve every missionary problem of the Church in America, and leave plenty for the foreign missions as well. Christ said to his Apostles: "Go out and teach." The missionary movement is a movement of Christ and His Church. We have our missionary field

for the next twenty-five years spread before us, "The Greeks are at our doors." We need not neglect those who are at a distance; but for those who are near, we have the sternest sort of an obligation. Church Extension has been a voice crying in the wilderness for ten years. It is long enough to cry. But it is a wonderful honor to be a precursor. Let this night be a new Holy Night. Let Toledo be a new Bethlehem. Let the shepherds come with the lamb of the flock and let the kings come with the gold, the myrrh and the frankincense. The thousands and the thousands await you. Jesus Christ, Himself, longs to go to His neglected children. He will go whether you help Him or not, some day. It is to your honor that He gives you the chance. Make a slogan of the missionary quarter, and you will solve the immigrant problem.

### THE IMMIGRATION PROBLEM

BY REVEREND FREDERICK SIEDENBURG, S.J., DEAN OF  
SOCIOLOGY, LOYOLA UNIVERSITY, CHICAGO.

*An Address Delivered before the Convention of the  
American Federation of Catholic Societies at  
Toledo, Ohio, August 17, 1915.*

**I**MMIGRATION problems are not of recent origin. No doubt the natives of San Salvador had such a problem when Columbus landed on their shores, and without doubt the Indians of Plymouth Rock debated whether our boasted Pilgrim Fathers would make desirable citizens. After all, we are all more or less immi-



grants, a fact that should not be lost sight of. Though our original settlers were mostly British, still Bancroft tells us, that in 1775 one-fifth had for their mother-tongue some other language than English. Prior to 1821 we had no Government statistics and from that time to 1915 our records show 31,348,720 aliens have come to our shores, an unparalleled fact in the history of the world. In the past nations and tribes in large numbers have migrated as natives and tribes, but our immigration has been individual, showing that these millions of immigrants have left their native homes in search of religious or political freedom or better economic conditions in this country. In the forties this great tide of immigration began first with the Irish and a little later came the Germans and nearly twelve millions of our immigrants have been from these sources. In the eighties the so-called new immigration began, first the Scandinavians came and then in turn the Pole, Italian and Hungarian, the Greek and the Russian and the Polish Jew. Are these millions of human beings a national asset or a liability? Are they making the United States a greater and better nation or are they dragging it down to the low level of the backward nations of the earth? This is the immigration problem in a nutshell and a problem that should interest us equally as Americans who love our country and as Catholics who are concerned about the souls of the immigrants, so many of whom are Catholics.

Bishop Canevin, has told you that we are here tonight to discuss, in all seriousness, the immigration problem. Obviously this is no occasion for the glitter of rhetoric or the glow of oratory, but an occasion, an opportune occasion, to examine the facts and figures which our immigration presents and in the light of these facts and

figures to apply our principles and to determine our action for the future.

That the immigration question is one of paramount importance needs no proof; suffice it to say that our Government has spent millions of dollars investigating and studying this problem and has published some of its results in forty-two large volumes. It has likewise established a permanent Immigration Bureau to continue this study and it employs an army of men as commissioners, as agents and investigators all over the country from Ellis Island to the Golden Gate to simplify, if possible, this intricate problem.

I have been asked to open this discussion and briefly to give a survey of the magnitude and general conditions of our new immigration and especially of the Catholic part of it. I have been asked to tell you why the Catholic immigrants come here, where they go and what they do. I have been asked to tell you of their social, financial and religious condition.

#### NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS

During the last hundred years about 52,000,000 aliens came to this country and of that number over 12,000,000 arrived here since 1901. But since about one-third of the number received, regularly leave the country, we can safely conclude that the immigrant has increased the population of the United States by about 25,000,000, of which number 13,345,000 or about fifteen per cent. of the total population of the United States were living in 1910. One person in every seven in the United States is born outside its borders. Our foreign-born population is about equal to the population of Holland and Belgium, before the war, or to that of Norway, Denmark and

Sweden combined. There are one-sixth as many Canadians here as in Canada and there are enough Irish here to make four Dublins and enough Italians to make three Romes. During the ten years ending in 1910, nearly 9,000,000 immigrants came to the United States, but on account of business depression and other causes more than 3,000,000 returned home. Because of these large figures, there is a common impression that our foreign-born population is growing faster than the native-born, but this impression is unfounded.

Over ninety per cent. of our immigrants have come from Europe, up to 1882, seventy-five per cent. came from Northern and Eastern Europe, and it is this latter immigration, called the new immigration, because in so many ways different from the old immigration, that is the cause of so much national discussion and concern.

#### CATHOLIC IMMIGRATION

How many of these millions are Catholics? Since the year 1899 the Immigration Bureau has not inquired as to the religious faith of the immigrant. In 1899 the number admitted was 361,000 of which one-fifth were Protestants; one-tenth were Jews and fifty-two per cent Catholics. Many think that these figures indicate about our proportion, thus Roberts "The New Immigrant," (page 201) says: "When the immigration stream runs at the rate of a million a year, more than 600,000 of the total are Roman Catholics. During the last twenty years the total number of immigrants entering the United States, adherents of the Catholic Church cannot be less than 10,000,000 souls." F. J. Haskins, another authority says: "The main body of the new immigration is Catholic and out of a million perhaps 600,000 are Catholic."

Bishop Canevin of Pittsburgh, an authority on the subject of immigration and Catholicism says: "Statistics show that the immigration of late years from countries that have a large percentage of Catholics, like Italy and Austria-Hungary, is less permanent than from other countries and large numbers of the Italian and Austria-Hungarian immigrants return to their native country, so that while Catholic immigration in the last twenty years has averaged sixty per cent. of the whole, Catholics in the total foreign-born population of the United States, at the end of each decade, have been from forty-seven per cent. to fifty-two per cent. of the whole. The number of the foreign-born persons from each country is given in the United States census, and the number of Catholics can be found by the percentage of Catholics in the population of the country from which the immigrants came. As a result of this investigation Bishop Canevin claims that out of the 13,343,593 foreign-born in the United States in 1910, 6,854,838 or fifty-one per cent. were Catholics.

#### WHY THEY COME

Why do the immigrants come? In the past the immigrants often came for political and religious reasons as well as to benefit themselves economically. Today immigration is essentially an economic phenomenon and in only the case of the Jew, the Russian and the Pole do religion and politics enter as contributory factors. On this subject Fairchild (page 145-47) says: "The one prevailing reason why the immigrant leaves his native village is that he is dissatisfied with his economic lot as compared with what it might be in the New World. The European peasant comes to America because he can, or believes he

can secure a greater return in material welfare for his labor; he is determined rather by the promise of America than by disappointment of his own country." He comes because he thinks his chances are better in a country of untilled land and untold natural resources. He comes because he has been told by the returning immigrant that the character of the American people is independent and daring and loves liberty, that it is in very truth "a unique people in a rich and virgin land."

These motives do not hold in every case and a considerable part of the new immigration is not spontaneous but rather artificial and stimulated by transportation companies, labor agents, and previous immigrants. The victims of this induced immigration are almost destined to failure and discontent. Unless our country and foreign countries legislate against it now immigrants will continue to come from all these countries of Europe where the political and economic situation is still inferior to that of the United States. All that is needed is a knowledge of the possibilities across the Atlantic and the means of getting there. This is proved by the fact that our immigration varies according to the economic condition of our country. In prosperous periods it is highest, in times of depression it declines and many immigrants return to their native lands.

On this subject Fairchild, "Immigration," (page 435) aptly concludes "Under present conditions a diminution in the immigration stream should not be interpreted as a cause of congratulation, but rather of deep consternation. For, except to the extent that restriction is actually accomplished by our laws, a cessation of the stream of immigration to the United States can only mean that economic conditions of this country have fallen to so low a

pitch that it is no longer worth while for the citizens of the meanest and most backward foreign country to make the moderate effort to get here."

#### WHERE THEY GO

If immigrants would distribute themselves evenly over the United States, and especially where work and opportunity are the greatest, the immigration problem would speedily solve itself. Instead of this there is a crowding of immigrants in certain localities and especially in the larger cities and manufacturing centers. In 1907 when immigration reached its climax out of the 1,285,000 who came to the United States, eighty-eight per cent. went to the eastern and northern central States; six per cent. to the western States, and four and one-half per cent. to the southern States. That this is the general distribution is evident from the fact that eighty-two per cent. of our immigrants are confined or rather conjected in eighteen per cent. of the territory of the United States. Especially in the more populous States is the immigrant always in evidence, thus the white foreign-born of Rhode Island is thirty-three per cent. of the population; New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut have about thirty per cent., while sparsely settled in States like Mississippi and North Carolina have less than one-half of one per cent. of foreign-born inhabitants. Our large cities unfortunately have a special lure for the immigrant. In New York city he is forty per cent. of the population, in Chicago, Boston, Cleveland and Detroit thirty-five; in San Francisco thirty per cent. and in Toledo twenty per cent. Thus has it come to pass that New York is the largest German city in the world except Berlin and the largest

Italian city except Naples and by far the largest Irish and Jewish city in the world.

The distribution of the immigrant says Fairchild, "Immigration," (page 232) is one of the most important phases of the whole problem, upon it depends the question whether the immigration and the economic opportunity which is his justification for being in the country shall come together. The question of assimilation, the contact between the newcomer and the native-born is primarily a matter of distribution. Pauperism, crime, disease, and the standard of living, education, morality and religion are to a greater or less degree all dependent upon distribution. If we would improve the condition of the immigrant we must improve their distribution."

#### WHAT THEY DO

Nearly three-fourths of our recent immigrants belong to the unskilled class of labor and this is especially true of the immigrants from Austria-Hungary and from Italy, and as a necessary consequence they naturally drift into the factory, the mine and on the railroad where they supply the demand for cheap labor and practically eliminate the native-born worker. In proof of this let us take two examples of Catholic immigrants. Of the 242,000 South Italian immigrants in 1907 only 701 were professional men; 26,000, or eleven per cent. were skilled laborers; while the number of unskilled amounted to 161,000 or sixty-six per cent. Of the 138,000 Poles who came in 1907 only 273 were professional men; 8,000 or six per cent. were skilled laborers and 107,000 or seventy-seven per cent. were unskilled. In the case of the Slav and the Hebrew, however, there is higher percentage of skilled laborers and professional men. The Slav is often em-

ployed in the better positions in mines and foundries. Of course he is sometimes found on the railroads and on farms, but it is the exception. For heavy work, the Slav is in demand, because no work is too onerous, too exhausting or too dangerous for him. (G. C. 1912 P. 183.)

#### THEIR SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL CONDITION

The social and financial condition of our recent immigrants are so interwoven that they can best be treated together. It is summarized and visualized when we remember that the immigrant lives in the most wretched parts of our cities and towns and that he more than any other suffers from their crying evils. The immigrant is generally poor, uneducated, without trade or profession. He is often without friends and never with influence, consequently when he comes to our shores he joins the ranks of the common day laborer, or at least the poorer paid wage earner. Handicapped in language, his way to advancement is slow and only with the greatest industry can he lift himself above the social and financial standing of the slum, the factory center or the mine colony. This fact tells us clearer than columns of cold statistics that for the most part his labor is hard and his reward light, that he is poorly housed and sparsely fed, that his pleasures are few and crude and his sorrows many.

Like the transgressor of Holy Writ his way is hard, he is often exploited by the immigration agent in his native land before he embarks, by the steamship and railroad company *en route* and by labor bosses and false countrymen after he has his job. In his simple ignorance he may nevertheless be satisfied with his meager lot but as he learns the lie of the land and the way of the people he gets the first real hope of better things but, alas! it is



often a hope deferred and seldom fully realized. One thing, however, is certain, taking economic and social conditions in the United States as they are today, the new immigrant, the Slav, the Italian, the Greek and the Jew, has not the same opportunity and hence not the same social and financial prospect that fell to the fortune of his forerunner, the Irish, the German and the Scandinavian. In the social sphere the new immigrant is even at a greater disadvantage for his language, character and customs are strange to the language, character and customs of America while the old immigrant found them often identical and always congenial.

In spite of these handicaps the new immigrant has made wonderful progress, the unfortunate and the weakling have to a great extent again embarked and many that remain are the "survival of the fittest" and like the immigrants of other days will eventually, we hope, even if at a slower pace, realize their own expectations and the hopes of their adopted country.

#### THEIR RELIGIOUS CONDITION

It is difficult to generalize on the religious condition of the immigrant because since 1899 we have no Government data on this point and we Catholics have unfortunately done nothing to supply this important information. An approximate estimate of the religious condition of the foreigner may be had by studying our Italian, Lithuanian, Mexican, Polish, Bohemian and other Slavic churches and organizations. This is a large and delicate subject and we all know that it has its lights and shadows; that in some quarters splendid and heroic work is being crowned with success, while in others only beginnings have been made. Of the new immigrant the

Slavs that have kept the Faith, are best organized in church societies as well as in others; they have a large and zealous clergy and their sisterhoods are on the increase. They have been lavish in building churches and are beginning to realize the all importance of the parochial school.

The Italian story is not so hopeful, the immigrant from Italy has not been so self-reliant as the persecuted Pole or the sturdy Slav and as a consequence Italian churches and organizations are often weak if not altogether wanting, while the Italian parochial school is still lost in the land of the future.

The United States may have its immigration problem but so too has the Catholic Church and rightly did Bishop Muldoon, speaking at the last Missionary Congress say, "Bishops and priests are straining every nerve and making heroic sacrifices for the Catholic immigrant. It is a prodigious task because the majority of those coming to our shores are aliens in speech and customs although one with us in Faith. In many cases the uppermost thoughts of these immigrants does not seem to be the salvation of their souls but an opportunity to better their condition. This immigration is a mighty asset for the nation and for the Church if guided aright, but with tendencies, in many instances, that will render it the very worst element of our population if not protected from the exploiter, the Socialist, proselyter and irreligious among their own nationalities."

Non-Catholics have again and again called attention to this gigantic and fruitful work of the church, thus Roberts "The New Immigrant," (page 201) says: "Never in the history of the world has a religious organization faced an obligation such as that confronting the

Roman Catholic Church of the United States. To shepherd these millions of souls speaking thirty different tongues, to house them in churches, to sooth racial prejudices, to secure an adequate number of priests, these are problems that no ecclesiastical body before in the history of the Christian Faith has been called upon to solve. The Catholic Church has done and is still doing a great work for the foreign-speaking people in America, if its beneficent influence were removed the millions of the new immigration would be far more lawless and reckless than they are, the teachings and leadings of this religious organization are a defence to both the secular and moral institutions of this country."

If there is one palpable defect in our church work for the immigrant it is that the social and civic relation to his religion has not been appreciated. This is especially true in the case of the new arrival who is tempted to judge the Church by what it does for him in a material way. Modern social work, and especially work of a preventive kind, as well as the corporal works of mercy insisted on by Christ are the imperative needs of our immigrant parishes.

#### ARE THEY A MENACE?

The immigration problem ultimately, as I have said, resolves itself into the question whether our present immigration is a national asset or liability. Many think it is a liability and some even pronounce it a positive menace. For all the evils in the industrial world, low wages, long hours, unsanitary conditions, for the evils of the social order, poverty, congestion, crime, for every wrong that can be traced, even remotely to the immigrant, restriction is heralded as the sole remedy. Only recently a restric-

tion bill failed to become law because the President vetoed it. If our immigration is a detriment to our country we are against it. The duty of our Government is first to protect our own people and guard our own institutions. If these are not jeopardized by the immigrant, justice and humanity demand that they be admitted into our country, for such is the ideal on which our institutions rest.

When the Irish and the German made their appearance the simon-pure Americans began to fear for their Republic and their remonstrances still live in the history of the Know-Nothing party and its treasonable riots. To-day, however, these immigrants and the Scandinavians are admitted on all sides to have been a benefit to the country and hence the immigrants from these sources are regarded as highly desirable. Not so, however, with the sons and daughters of Southern and Eastern Europe. These we are told are undesirable for many reasons.

#### INDUSTRIAL OBJECTIONS

They flood the market with cheap, unskilled labor and even pauper labor. They settle in our crowded cities, accept starvation wages and live under conditions impossible for an American. In a word, they are a menace to our industrial life. But we must remember that the immigrant does not come to usurp the place of the skilled labor but rather to take the place of a former immigrant who has graduated from the ranks of the day laborer. That the immigrant does not lower labor standards is clear from the fact that in the immigrant states the child labor is less frequent and labor unions more numerous than in the non-immigrant states. Again, would American capital have attempted so much, or progressed so

much if it had not reckoned with the so-called cheap labor of the new Americans? The Irish and Germans build our canals and our first railroads, their successors have continued the pioneer work and have added to it our bridges, our tunnels and our subways. Yea more, they have made it possible for American industry to compete in the open markets of the world. The immigrants, we are told, are birds of passage, and they say for instance, that after the Italians dug the New York subway they took their hard-earned coin back to Italy. What of that? They left New York its subway, which Americans would not have dug.

#### POLITICAL OBJECTIONS

Others oppose the new immigrant for political reasons. These people they say are by centuries of thought and action unfit to be assimilated by democratic, liberty-loving people. Their standards and ideals of government clash with ours and they are incapable of understanding our free, political institutions. If they do not sell their votes they are controlled by a few unscrupulous leaders who often hold the balance of party power, and then they may become a political menace to the country. The immigrant himself answers, and with truth: "There is more democracy from whence I came than there was in the land of the old and desirable immigrant. He fled from political tyranny, we seek fuller freedom. We have tasted democracy and have come for more." Does the immigrant sell his vote? Some years ago 3,000 citizens of Pennsylvania and Ohio were disfranchised for this crime and it was remarked that the foreign-born citizens were conspicuous by their absence.

## MORAL OBJECTIONS

The new immigrant is also accused of being immoral, or at least of lowering the moral standard of the country. This might be true if poverty and misfortune are always identified with moral evil, but fortunately it is not the case, nor can it be proved that the new immigrant is a menace to our nation's morals. Our Government statistics would seem to prove the contrary. In 1908, 1909 and 1910 out of 10,000 immigrants from the so-called desirable nations of Northern and Western Europe, forty-two persons were deported for immorality; out of the same number of Jews, eight were deported and of the Southern Italians, only five persons. Again of the aliens sent back for physical and mental defects the five favored nations had out of every 10,000, 17.6 persons; the Jews had 9.4; and the Southern Italians 4.8. If the foreign-born is more criminal than the American-born he was not so in his fatherland. Perhaps we may find the reason in our own social and economic conditions, in the fact that he is poor and despised and does not know our language, and is without influence before the law.

## THEIR ILLITERACY

The large percentage of illiteracy among our present-day immigrants—it is fifty per cent. among the Southern Italians, and thirty per cent. among the Jews—is also considered a menace to our free institutions and is considered connected with the excessive poverty and crime of these classes. Hence it was proposed in the Burnett-Dillingham Bill that our immigration should be restricted to a certain percentage, *i. e.* ten per cent. of such nationalities as are already resident in the United States. Then a

literacy test was proposed, which besides cutting down the immigration still more, would be the means of eliminating the "undesirables." But would illiteracy be a real test? Must a man be an ignoramus or an undesirable because he is not able to read or write? Many of the barons of the middle ages were far from being either fools or ignorant, and yet they could not pass a literacy test. Then, too, we have jails full of very shrewd undesirables, men who know how to write so well that they can even write on bank checks another's name as well as their own. When Banker Walsh went to Leavenworth prison, he found twenty-eight bankers there, enough to form a bankers' club, and no one could accuse them of not being able to read or write. Rightly did Presidents Cleveland, Taft and Wilson veto the literacy test, for it is no criterion of present or future citizenship. Give us physical, moral and character tests, but not a test of reading fifty words in some language, as a form of American citizenship.

#### CAN THEY BE ASSIMILATED?

All these objections now used against the Italian, the Jew and the Slav were once used with equal violence against the German and the Irish. They have since been proved to be false and now no one denies that the German and the Irish have been assimilated and indeed for the welfare of the whole country. Why, therefore, cannot the new immigrant and especially his children be assimilated? Has our melting-pot lost its power, or must it turn out our adopted citizens, robbed of every fine trait and noble tradition of his native land? Our melting-pot, if it is worth while, must eliminate only the exile and amalgamate all the good. Let our immigrants cling to all

that was best in the land of their birth and add to it the noblest that we have to give them. Today, all told, there are only 15,000,000 foreign-born persons in the country. Are the 85,000,000 native-born afraid of these, and are they in jeopardy if every year less than a million strangers come to our shores; have we ceased to be the refuge of the oppressed and the home of the free, shall we deny to immigrants of today what our forefathers sought and received a few decades ago?

### THE CATHOLIC IMMIGRANT

BY CHARLES E. FAY

*Extracts from a Speech Delivered before the Convention  
of the American Federation of Catholic Societies,  
at Toledo, Ohio, August 17, 1915.*

THE differences which are naturally engendered among men by their various locations and environment in different parts of the globe, give rise, whenever they move in considerable numbers from one place to another, to problems which have been found difficult to solve in the past. The best solution to these is assimilation which is hastened and made more easy where the native and alien alike acknowledge the same fundamental law and worship the One God at the same altar. This is the salient thought that stands out in our subject to-night: the Catholic immigrant.

Scientific method is of inestimable value and the need for an analysis of the question is manifest, but when we have made our analysis, what then? Action. There is



a time for words and a time for deeds and if we neglect either, by so much we have fallen short of our allotted task.

We are all immigrants or descendants of immigrants, for it is not so many years ago that America was a wilderness. The first white men here were Catholics. They discovered and explored the land and its lakes and rivers. Our missionaries suffered martyrdom for the conversion of the Redman. Our ancestors in the Faith placed upon the statute books the first laws of religious freedom in America. They have lived and suffered and died that we might live and they tell us to continue the work that they began. Will future generations be able to say of us what we may say of past generations?

The immigrant comes here seeking a home; he comes looking to America as the land of hope and opportunity, the promised land, whereof it is said that here mere accidents of birth or wealth do not constitute the individual what he is, but that character and ability are the standards. This is the theory, not always met with in practice, perhaps, but we should strive to make it so. He comes here to better his condition.

His language presents no great obstacle. There are many races here, there are many tongues spoken here, and there are newspapers printed in nearly every language. The newcomer finds here usually those who can understand him and whom he can understand, until such time as he can acquaint himself with the dominant language of the country. Our evening schools have special classes where the immigrant is taught the English tongue. We have much to learn from the immigrant.

His poverty when he enters usually is no greater, thanks to the immigration laws, than is the poverty of

thousands of natives. He comes usually from Europe. Intercommunication is advancing day by day. Theories and conditions are now the common property of mankind. The economic, social, religious and philosophic matters agitating Europe are felt in the same way here. Surely, Leo XIII well knew the conditions when he said that vast masses of mankind had come to conditions "little better than slavery itself" and that something should be done and done quickly to bring about standards of living that are Christians. When he said that, he was speaking to you and to me. Let us show the immigrant and the whole world, that we do not consider money the measure of true success, and that we are indeed what our positions as Christians demand of us, helpers of those who are oppressed, true friends of the afflicted.

Proselyters are busy at their trade; the wolf in sheep's clothing with his obsession of "Romanism" and his queer "blessing in Italian" for those whom he can deceive; the shameless falsifier and pretender who tries to imitate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass in order to lure the lambs of the flock: these are but instances of many dangers that confront the newcomer whose simple trust is often and in many ways outraged by pretended friends.

The changed mode of living presents no inherent difficulty, provided the immigrant has been taught his religion at home. There are difficulties, of course, where people who come from an agricultural district are compelled to work in manufacturing centers. Here the laity as well as the clergy has important work to do. There is a work for all, men and women, young and old.

My limited time demands that I confine myself to general remarks on this subject and tell what we have done and are doing in the Archdiocese of Boston. Each

one is familiar with what is being done in his own section of the country.

The welfare of the immigrant and the welfare of the native are inseparable. If we fall, they fall, and they stand, if we do. Men are becoming more and more restless and discontented. The masses of Europe and the masses of America alike are agitated by speakers and teachers on subjects that are fundamental in importance. Falsehood, in the name of philosophy, politics, religion, progress and science has made entry into millions of minds. Immigration is not just what it was in former times, a strange people going to strangers with other customs, religions, philosophical or political theories. For these, I say, are largely the common stock of knowledge of native and alien alike. Theories and movements are international. Thought today knows no geographical boundaries, distance is annihilated, and there is hardly a nationality coming to our shores but what has been preceded by other individuals from the same source.

In all our difficulties and problems we do a great deal of theorizing, investigating and planning, all of which is useful, but I think that if we spent half the time we devote to these preliminaries in constructive work and practical application of our principles our work would proceed more swiftly and surely than it does. Much has been done, but who can measure what there is yet to be done?

Socialism is an example. Here we have, as Bebel says, "a philosophy of life, entering into every phase of human activity"; a movement not adequately comprehended by ten per cent. of its membership; a school of thought founded on atheism, involving necessarily the fatalism, despotism and blasphemy such a foundation demands.

It is an economic absurdity, a political monstrosity and philosophic lunacy. And yet, with the goodly outside often worn by falsehood, it approaches not only the immigrant who may have heard of it at home, but the native as well, with fair promises of happiness and freedom when "the people" receive the rewards for their labors. What a crude distortion of Socialism is given by the average agitator we are all aware; and we are aware also of the real significance of the movement; we know the principles for which it stands, and how far from the truth, notwithstanding the probably good intentions of some of its victims.

To offset or minimize the evil effects of this movement public meetings were held, under the patronage of his Eminence Cardinal O'Connell, in various places in the Boston archdiocese where priests and laymen exposed its real teachings. The effects were evident and the inherent antagonism between Christian truth and Socialism was made plain for all to see. About four years ago an organization of young men was formed under the name of the Common Cause Society and in its short life it has done much to make known sound Christian principles, true history, and it has concerned itself with making known the Catholic position on all the great questions of the day. Every Sunday night throughout the winter meetings are held with an audience always over 1,000 people. During the summer indoor meetings are held on Thursday nights, and open air meetings are held on Boston Common on Sunday afternoons from 4.00 to 6.00, and in one of the public squares on Saturday nights from 10.00 to midnight. Usually opponents are invited to take the platform at the close of the main address and afterwards the chief speaker uses the last half-hour in reply-

ing to the objections offered and in summing up his argument. That the work of the organization has been effective and sound is the judgment rendered by those whose opinion or convictions are of value. In fact this is acknowledged also by our enemies, for the State Secretary of the Socialist party in Massachusetts in his recent report to the delegates in annual convention in that State told them that because of the work of the Society many locals reported that they were finding it impossible to make any impression upon the voters, that some of the locals were dying, and that if some way could not be found to answer the attacks made upon the movement the best thing they could do would be to acknowledge that their anticipated social revolution was only a dream. In this way we save and strengthen our own and the alien Catholic coming to our shores has a fighting army for a friend.

The absence of old home safeguards is another danger, but this too can be minimized by an alert Catholic body. The Boston Catholic Immigration Society, the old St. Joseph's Home, St. Helena's House for Catholic traveling girls and such organizations it may be assumed are duplicated in many places.

I may be optimistic as to possibilities, but they really are great. What we want is not more figuring but more fighting; not "What shall we do?" for there are hundreds of things that can be done, but more men, knowing what should be done, who will go out and do it.

The immigrant is our friend and brother. Let us not merely talk as if he were, but act in accordance with our knowledge. Usually where there is a will, there is a way, and if we cannot discern it we may be sure that if we have the will God will show us the way. The generals

must be few and the soldiers many. Let us be ready, when occasion requires, to take the humble place judged by human standard, knowing that the sometimes forgotten sentinel at his lonely post really has the army in his keeping, and that duty is duty, honor is honor, valor is valor, and glory is glory in the eyes of Almighty God; and when our fight is done, how great shall be our hope when we set out on that mightiest of all migrations, the passing over of the sons of men into the realm that is to be our eternal home.

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